

COVID-19 AND LONG-TERM CARE

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19, also known as Novel Coronavirus, is a part of the larger family of Coronaviruses. COVID-19 has not previously been identified in humans until the start of this pandemic. This strain of the virus is zoonotic (can transmit between humans and animals). Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. At this point, the virus has spread to countries across the globe and almost every state of the United States.

Older adults and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions (specifically Heart Disease, Diabetes, and Lung Disease) are at increased risk to experience severe symptoms caused by this virus including kidney failure and death.

How can you protect yourself?

To protect yourself from being infected with COVID-19 practice regular hand washing, avoid close contact with individuals showing respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.), and cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a disposable tissue or napkin. Social Distancing is another widely recommended practice.

What is Social Distancing?

Social Distance is an important tool when managing the spread of infectious diseases. It aims to reduce the amount of social contact and therefore reduce the rate of infection within communities. By doing so, we are able to delay and minimize the peak of infection. You might hear this referred to as “flattening the curve.” Our health care agencies have limited capacity so it is imperative to restrict the spread of the virus as much as possible. The Center for Disease Control recommends remaining at least 6 feet away from others when possible, avoid large crowds of people and avoid contact with items that may have been in contact with respiratory droplets (from cough, sneeze, etc.).

How does this affect you?

In order to protect residents of long-term care facilities the Center for Disease Control, New York State Department of Health and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have restricted visitation to only emergency, compassionate care. This includes all volunteers and non-essential personnel. Large gatherings such as dining or activities must be suspended or adjusted to avoid unnecessary contact. Meals will be provided in rooms. Long-term care facilities should also initiate active screening for any staff member or resident who shows signs of infection such as fever, or respiratory symptoms.

How can I contact my Ombudsman?

In order to protect residents from the spread of the virus, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has temporarily ceased facility visits until further notice. However, if you are in need of assistance or have questions about the current situation, please call the number below. The Regional Ombudsman Coordinators will help to assist as best as possible under the current conditions.



**Office of the State
Long Term Care
Ombudsman**

Organization Name: Tompkins
County Office for the Aging

Contact info: **607-274-**

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